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PETER TESTMAN'S ACCOUNT OF HIS EXPERIENCES IN NORTH AMERICA

TRANSLATED AND EDITED
BY
THEODORE C. BLEGEN

PUBLISHED BY
THE NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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TRAVEL AND DESCRIPTION SERIES

Volume II

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THE NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
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HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

In studying the European backgrounds of the American immigration of the nineteenth century it is important to examine the vast advertising movement that carried the story of the United States to all parts of the Old World. Norway offers an excellent illustration of the main phases of this movement. When the nineteenth-century emigration from that country began in 1825, the people of Norway knew very little about trans-Atlantic conditions. Not only was the country isolated to a considerable extent from the rest of Europe but the people themselves, because of geographical barriers and lack of easy means of communication, were divided into groups differing considerably in customs and dialect, many of them to an astonishing degree isolated. As late as 1836 a Norwegian *bonde* went down from his native district to a seaport town and there for the first time in his life heard "about a country that was called America." [1] Probably in many parts of continental Europe, even where isolation was not so extreme as in the Norwegian valleys, the peasants were blissfully ignorant of the glories of distant America. Samuel Topliff, a Yankee who traveled in France in 1828 and 1829, records that many of the people whom he met did not know about such a country. "Some appeared to stare and look as if they never before heard the name." [2]

In Norway the letters that came from emigrants who had dared the perils of the journey across the Atlantic and into

[1] The *bonde* was Ole Nattestad, who visited Stavanger with his brother Ansten in the year indicated, and returned to his home in Numedal to ponder upon his own economic difficulties and the possible escape from them that America opened up to him. The next year the two brothers emigrated. Svein Nilssen interviewed the Nattestads many years later and gives a full report, with long quotations, in "De Skandinaviske Setlementer i Amerika," in *Billed-magazin*, 1: 82–84, 94, 102–104.

[2] Topliff, *Letters from Abroad in the Years 1828–1829*, 198, as quoted in George M. Stephenson, *A History of American Immigration 1820–1924*, 6 (Boston and New York, 1926).

the American interior were practically the only available sources of information about the New World in the twenties and early thirties. They were read with keen interest by those who received them, and were then copied and recopied, carried from one farmhouse to another, and gradually disseminated throughout whole districts. "America letters" they were commonly called, and not infrequently they gave rise to a burning desire to emigrate, a spirit that was appropriately termed the "America fever." [3] Not until 1838 was a printed handbook of information about the United States made available. This book was Ole Rynning's *True Account of America*, a valuable work written in Illinois by an immigrant of 1837.[4] In the late thirties and early forties a number of books and pamphlets relating to America were published in Norway, and soon the printed records of personal experiences were supplemented by advertising pamphlets issued by states, railway companies, land companies, and other organizations which, for one reason or another, desired to stimulate the emigration.

The immigrants and travelers whose writings were circulated throughout Norway did not consciously fit their testimony in with all that had been said and written before. They sent back their own independent versions of things seen and heard, and the result, taken as a whole, was a report on a grand scale to the people of Norway. Naturally there were on the one hand, errors and exaggerations as a result of undue optimism, while on the other hand hardships and discouragement sometimes resulted in reports unwarrantedly pessimistic in tone. The readers in Norway in many instances were thus able to compare the reports of both the successful and the unsuccessful immigrants, and to see both sides of the situation.

Peter Testman, a tinner in the city of Stavanger, Norway, emigrated in the spring of 1838, together with two brothers

[3] A typical "America letter" — one written by Gjert G. Hovland from Rochester, New York, on April 22, 1835 — is translated by the writer in the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 9:68–75 (June, 1922).

[4] An English translation of this book was brought out, with the original text, in volume 1 of the present Travel and Description Series.

and three other men. He took the route by way of Bremen and New York, and under the leadership of the veteran emigrant guide, Cleng Peerson, journeyed to the little Norwegian settlement in Shelby County, Missouri, the site of which had been selected the year before by Peerson. As a result of his experiences in this pioneer community, Testman decided to return to Norway, and this he did in the spring of 1839. His journey took him to the Fox River settlement of Norwegians in Illinois and to Chicago, and thence east by way of the Great Lakes, the Erie Canal, and the Hudson River. After his return to Norway he wrote a small book in which he told the story of his adventure.

Testman returned to Norway empty-handed and disillusioned. Unwittingly he had embarked upon his great adventure at a time when the United States was in the slough of depression that followed the panic of 1837. His case may be considered as a human footnote bearing upon those fluctuations in migration that economists have charted in relation to business cycles. His story might have been a pessimistic one even if he had chosen a settlement in America less unfortunate in its economic development than the Shelby County colony in Missouri. That he went to one of the least successful of the Norwegian settlements in America certainly accounts in part for the gloomy picture that he painted of the New World. As an antidote to the books that were picturing America in colors altogether too bright and thus raising expectations that could not be fulfilled, Testman's narrative doubtless served a useful purpose. He showed that the American streets were not paved with gold. He warned the Norwegians that the long journey was fraught with perils and that its financial cost was heavy. He pointed out that the dreams of the emigrants were too bright. His account is undoubtedly one-sided, but it is none the less a vivid and detailed first-hand record of an immigrant's experiences and is therefore worthy of study by those who would understand the story of immigrant settlement in the West. It is of interest also for its faithful presentation

of the details of the journey and its descriptions of the changing scenes that the traveler viewed.

The only known copy of Testman's book is that in the public library of Bergen, Norway. Through the courtesy of the officials of that institution and of the director of the national archives in Oslo, a photostatic copy of the volume was obtained by the Norwegian-American Historical Association. From the photostats zinc etchings have been made, and it is therefore possible to present in the following pages a facsimile of the original text. The original was discovered in Bergen by Mr. Gunnar J. Malmin, who spent the year 1924–25 in Norway as an agent of the Carnegie Institution of Washington. Mr. Malmin at that time supplied the Minnesota Historical Society with a transcript of the book. This was used in making an English translation that was brought out in the June, 1925, number of *Minnesota History*, the quarterly organ of the Minnesota Historical Society. This translation, with a few minor changes, is incorporated in the present edition, which brings together the original text and an English translation for the first time. In making the translation the writer had the efficient assistance of his sister, Miss Anne H. Blegen, and in the final revision much help was received from Dr. Grace Lee Nute, curator of manuscripts for the Minnesota Historical Society.

FACSIMILE OF ORIGINAL NORWEGIAN TEXT

PETER TESTMAN

KORT BESKRIVELSE OVER DE VIGTIGSTE ERFARINGER UNDER ET OPHOLD I NORD-AMERICA OG PAA FLERE DERMED FORBUNDNE REISER

Kort Beskrivelse

over de vigtigste

Erfaringer

under et Ophold i Nord-America og paa flere dermed forbundne Reiser;

af

Peter Testman,
Blikkenslager.

Stavanger.
Trykt hos L. C. Kielland.

1839.

For 15 a 16 Aar tilbage begyndte Udvandringerne fra Norge til de forenede nordamericanſke Friſtater, efterat de allerede længe havde fundet Sted fra de ſydlige europæiſke Lande, og de have i de ſidſte Aaringer mærkelig tiltaget, hvilket vel fornemmelig har havt ſin Grund i de tillokkende Fortællinger, ſom de tidligere Udvandrede ved deres Beſøg i Fædrenelandet gave om det Lands Herligheder, hvori de nu havde tilbragt nogle Aar. Diſſe Fortællingers Troværdighed beſtyrkedes desuden ikke lidet ved de mange Breve, ſom diſſe Beſøgende gjerne havde med ſig fra de i America værende Norſke til deres Slægt og Venner her i Norge, hvilke Breve næſten alle uden Undtagelſe indeholdt de ſamme Lovtaler over det fremmede og langtbortliggende Land. Dette opvakte naturligviis Lyſten hos Flere til ligeledes at forſøge deres Lykke i de lovpriſte Egne, hvor ſaa Mange af deres udvandrede Landsmænd, og deriblandt deres egen Slægt og Venner, befandt ſig ſaa lykkelige; hertil bleve de desuden af de Beſøgende kraftigen opmuntrede, og Udvandringerne herfra begyndte nu mærkeligen at tiltage.

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En længe næret Længsel efter at beſee dette Land, og om muligt at boſætte mig der, blev ved ſaa mange behagelige Efterretninger ogſaa hos mig bragt til en faſt Beſlutning, da jeg ved Agerdyrkning og Fædrift troede der at kunne finde en fri og behagelig Næringsvei.

Til den Ende opgav jeg allerede tidlig om Foraaret 1837 min Næringsrettighed i Stavanger, hvor jeg hidtil havde været boſat; men da jeg formedelſt adſkillige tilſtødende Omſtændigheder blev hindret fra at benytte mig af den Skibsleilighed, ſom i dette Aars Sommer afgik herfra til New-York, ſaa forblev jeg her indtil næſte Foraar 1838. Tilligemed 2de af mine Brødre og endnu 3 ældre Perſoner afreiſte jeg i Begyndelſen af Mai herfra, og tog Veien over Bremen, i den Tanke, der at finde deſto snarere Leilighed over Havet til New-York; men heri bleve vi ſkuffede, da vi maatte ligge og vente derefter i fulde 3 Uger, og imidlertid betale en dyr Koſt og Logis. Under dette Ophold havde jeg Anledning til at beſee den tydſke Jordbund ved Bremerhavn — hvortil vi vare ankomne — og opad Floden Weſer til Bremen. Egnen var overalt vel dyrket, tæt bebygget og frembød for Øiet et behageligt Syn. De frugtbare Rugagre ſtode allerede, endſkjøndt det først var i Begyndelſen af Juni Maaned, i Ax. Jeg forbauſedes næſten over Størrelſen af de Kreature, ſom i Mængde gik og græsſede paa en ſtor feed Slette; efter Sigende ſkal enkelte af dem opveie 3 gode Kreature af vore og malke indtil 20 Potter ad Gangen.

Vi afreiſte endelig fra Bremerhavn med en der hjemmehørende hurtigſeilende ny Brig, ſom alene var fragtet af og med Paſſagerer fra forſkjellige Egne af Tydſkland.

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Mödvind foraarsagede, at Capitainen forandrede sin forst: tagne Cours og styrede nord om Skotland. Vi maatte snart erfare det Ubeqvemme og Mangelfulde i vor Stilling. Da en saa stor Mængde Mennesker var sammenpakket i et snevert Rum, blev Luften meget qvalm og usund; hertil kom, at Maden, som vi havde betinget os ombord, næsten altid var saa salt, at vi blot kunde nyde Lidet deraf, især da vi ikke bleve tildeelte saa meget friskt Vand, som vi be: høvede; mange mindre Ulemper ei at omtale.

Efter henimod 8 Ugers Seilads ankom vi lykkelig til vort første Bestemmelsessted New-York. Med faa Und: tagelser havde vi krydset os frem i en næsten uafladelig Vestenvind og vi vare nu glade, at vi skulde slippe ud i det Frie ligesom af et Fængsel. En stor Dæksbaad eller Jægt afhentede os og lagde først hen til en stor omskydt Brygge, med adskillige Indretninger til Klæders Rensning, hvor alt vort Tøi blev visiteret; det som befandtes ureent, maatte ikke bringes i Land førend det var toet. Da dette var skeet, bleve vi paa den samme Baad hensatte til en af Stadens Brygger paa den sydlige Kant, hvor en stor Mængde Mennesker, som allerede var forsamlet, strax om: ringede os, forat fortjene Noget med at kjøre eller bære vort Tøi. En stor Deel Herbergerere trængte ogsaa ind paa os, forat tilbyde os Herberge. Folketrængselen og Tummelen var saa stor, at vi neppe kunde trænge os frem. Vort Tøi kunde vi ikke passe saa vel paa, som det her gjor: des fornødent, og det var derfor en stor Lykke, at vi des: uagtet Intet mistede, saamegetmere som de forskjellige Pas: sagerers Tøi efter Visiteringen blev kastet om hinanden ned i Rummet af Dæksbaaden, og nu paa Vogne kjørt til

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forſkjellige Kanter af Byen. Vi Norſke toge ind i et ſimpelt Herberge, men hvor alligevel hver Perſon maatte give $\frac{3}{8}$ Pjaſter*) daglig for Koſt og Logis.

I New-York opholdt vi os paa den femte Dag, for at bringe vore Sager i Orden. Noget Mærkeligt fremfor i enhver anden ſtor Stad kom mig ikke for Øine; derimod tildrog en Jernbane, ſom gik ud fra den nordlige Kant af Staden, med dens Dampvogne, ſig min Opmærkſomhed. Denne Indretning var den første af det Slags, jeg havde ſeet, og jeg var derfor nysgjerrig efter at betragte noget nøiere ſaavel Vognene ſom Banen, hvorfor jeg fik iſinde at gjøre en liden Tour paa den. Med Flere af mit Følge ſteeg jeg derfor ind i en af Vognene i Rækken, og i mindre end en halv Time fore vi ud til den nordlige Kant af den Ø, ſom Staden er bygget paa: en Vei af noget over 8 engelſke Mile. Denne Bane var dobbel, ſaa at medens Vognene paa den ene Side afgik fra Staden, kom de paa den anden Side tilbage til ſamme. Den var anlagt næſten vandret, ſaa at alle de Ujævnheder, hvorigjennem den førte, vare igjennemſkaarne. Et Bjerg, ſom var gjennemmineret i en Længde af omtrent 3 engelſke Mile, har iſær koſtet meget Arbeide. Paa en temmelig lang Strækning ſtod Bjerget ſom en Hvælving over Banen og dannede en ſaakaldet Tunnel. Da vi vare ankomne til den nordlige Kant af Øen, hvor Vognene ſtandſede, ſtege vi af og foretoge en Vandring tilfods, for at beſee Landet deromkring, og fandt vi da, at Jorden overalt maatte gjø-

*) En Pjaſter eller Dollar har 100 Cents eller i norſke Penge 112 Skilling Sølv.

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des og dyrkes godt for at give sin Frugt. Vi opdagede her nogle Ruiner af smaa Fæstningsværker fra den Tid da Hollænderne besad denne Egn, hvilke uden Tvivl havde tjent dem til Forsvar mod Landets vilde Indbyggere.

Vor Bestemmelse var, at bekomme et Stykke Land, hvoraf vi kunde have vort Ophold ved Agerdyrkning og Fædrift. Til dette Øiemed maatte vi begive os længere ind i Landet. I Omegnen af New-York var der nemlig kun lidet Land at erholde, og det til en Priis af over 300 Pjastre pr. Acre*). Dagen før vor Afreise fra New-York traf vi en af vore Landsmænd, som var af de første Udvandrede fra den vestlige Kant af Norge. Han var nu just paa en Reise fra de vestligste Stater, og skulde vende hjem igjen. Han opmuntrede os til at følge sig, og beskrev Staten Missouri, hvor han boer, som udmærket skjøn og herlig. Vi samtykkede i at følge ham derhen, og jeg især af den Aarsag, for i ham at faae en Veiviser og Tolk, da han var meget bereist i alle de nordlige Stater og talede temmelig flydende Engelsk.

Paa en stor Dæksbaad med Tag over, som tilligemed 5 Andre bleve surrede fast til begge Sider af et Dampfartøi, reiste vi opad Hudsonsfloden til Albany: en Vei af 150 engelske Mile. Derfra toge vi ombord i en Canalbaad, for at fortsætte Reisen igjennem Erie Canal, efterat vort Tøi var bleven veiet. For hvert Centner (100 ℔) betaltes igjennem denne Canal 91 Cents. Da denne Fragt var erlagt af Passagererne, blev Baaden trukken ind paa en stor Vægtskaal, som hang dybt ned i Vandet; dette

*) En Acre er omtrent en norsk Tønde Land.

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blev derefter udtappet ved Sluser, og Baaden med hele dens Ladning veiet, for at beregne Canalpengene, som Skipperen havde at betale. En saadan Canalbaad kan rumme fra 100 til 150 Tønder; Andre, som blot føre Last uden Passagerer, rumme i Almindelighed det Dobbelte.

Baaden, hvorpaa vi reiste, blev Nat og Dag trukket af 2de Heste; men vi avancerede ikke ret hurtigt fremad, da Hestene formedelst den svære Last stedse maatte gaae Skridtgang. De saakaldte Paqvetbaade derimod, som ligeledes passere denne Canal, og det blot med Passagerer, have 3 Heste, og gaae over dobbelt saa hurtig; men Fragten med disse sidste Baade udgjør ogsaa indtil det Firedobbelte, mod hvad man betaler for de Første. Ved de mange Byer, hvorigjennem bemeldte Canal gaaer, blev der enten losset eller ladet, hvilket ogsaa foraarsagede nogen Forsinkelse i vor Reise. Levnetsmidlerne vare paa disse Steder temmelig dyre: 1 ℔ Smør kostede fra 18 til 25 Cents, 1 ℔ Flesk 12 a 16 Cts., 1 ℔ Kjød 8 a 10 Cts., 1 Pot Melk 6 Cts., 1 Brød, ikke større end at det udgjorde et Maaltid for een Person, 6 Cents, og andre Ting i samme Forhold. Da vi efter 6 Dages Forløb ankom til Rochester, —der ligger 270 engelske Mile fra Albany— tøvede vi her et Par Dage hos de Faa af vore Landsmænd, som der opholdt sig. Vort Reiseselskab blev paa dette Sted forøget med Flere af disse Norske, saa at vi ialt udgjorde 22 Personer. Næsten alle de, som saaledes sluttede sig til os, vare i fattige Omstændigheder og bleve tildeels af vor Ledsager overtalede til at følge med. Vi ankom derefter til Buffalo, beliggende ved den østlige Bund

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af Erie Sø, 93 engelſke Mile fra Rocheſter, hvor Canalen ender. Her toge vi ombord i et ſtort Dampſkib, ſom var beſtemt lige til Chicago i Illinois: en Strækning af henimod 1000 engelſke Mile Sovei; men vor Ledſager overtalede os til ikke at reiſe derhen, da vort Tøi derfra endnu maatte transporteres 100 engelſke Mile landværts, hvilken Transport vilde blive meget koſtbar, fordi der fra ſidſtnævnte Sted endnu ikke var anlagt nogen Jernbane. Da vi ankom til Cleveland i Ohio Stat, 193 engelſke Mile fra Buffalo, begave vi os derfra atter ombord i en Canalbaad, for at fortſætte vor Vei igjennem Ohio Canal og derfra videre paa Floderne Ohio og Miſiſiſippi til vort Beſtemmelſesſted i Miſſouri. Denne Forandring i vor Reiſeplan var jeg længe imod, af den Aarſag, at jeg af trykte Beretninger havde erfaret, at næſten alle de nordamericanſke Floder i den tørre Aarstid —hvori vi netop nu befandt os— havde meget lavt Vand, og vare derfor vanſkelige at befare. Udfaldet viſte, at dette i Sandhed forholdt ſig ſaa, hvilket længere nedenfor ſkal nærmere blive fortalt. Ohio Canal gaaer fra Nord mod Syd fordetmeſte igjennem øde med Skov begroede Landſtrækninger, men ſom allerede ere opkjøbte af rige Mænd pr. Speculation. Dette er Aarſagen til at Landet endnu ligger ſaa øde.

Saa længe vor Reiſe varede paa denne 306 engelſke Mile lange Canal, vare vi ikke udſatte for nogen videre Beſværligheder; men da vi vare ankomne til Portsmouth, hvor Canalen ender, fik vi ſtrax et ikke lidet anſtrængende Arbeide, forbunden med betydelige Pengeudgifter, for at faae vort Tøi bragt hen til det i Ohio-Floden liggende Dampſkib, da Scioto-Floden, ſom vi til den Ende ſkulde

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ſætte over, havde ſaa lavt Vand, at Canalbaaden ikke kun-de befare den. Vi maatte nu alle begynde at udloſſe af Canalbaaden de mange tildeels meget tunge Kiſter og Pak-ker, og atter læſſe dem op paa Vogne, hvorpaa de bleve transporterede hen til Bredden af Ohio-Floden, hvor vi naturligvis maatte gjentage det ſamme tunge Arbeide, for at faae dem over i Dampſkibet. Nu havde vi paa denne Flod en Veilængde for os af 619 engelſke Mile førend vi kunde naae Miſſiſſippi, i hvilken den løber ud. Ohio er vel i Almindelighed ſeilbar for Dampſkibe fra Pittsburg af og nedefter i en Længde af over 970 engelſke Mile til dens Udløb; men dette er ikke Tilfældet i den tørre Aars-tid, og denne Gang var den endog ſaa liden, at vi over 20 Gange ſtode faſt paa Grund, ved hvilke Leiligheder vi ikke ſielden maatte udloſſe alt vort Tøi i Pramme og der-med fare hen til de dybere Steder i Floden, for der igjen at indlade det i Dampſkibet, naar dette havde arbeidet ſig løs, — hvilket ofte ikke lykkedes førend efter 24 a 30 Timers Anſtrængelſe. Men paa 2de Steder var det al-deles umuligt for Skibet at komme over Bankerne, af hvilken Aarſag vi maatte begive os med alt vort Tøi over i andre Dampſkibe, ſom laae nedenfor diſſe Grunde, hvor-ved Fragten blev dobbelt, imod hvad den ellers var bleven paa den hele Veilængde fra Portsmouth til St. Louis, uden at tale om Provianten, hvoraf vi for en ſaa lang Tid —hvori Reiſen blev forſinket— maatte forſyne os indtil det Femdobbelte. Denne blev tildeels endog, imod Forventning, dyrere jo længere vi avancerede ind i Landet; ſaaledes ſteeg f. Ex. Priſen paa Melk indtil det Dobbelte og Potatos koſtede fra 3 til 4 Pjaſtre pr. Tønde.

11

Da Sommerheden under hele denne Deel af vor Reiſe var ſaa trykkende, at vi endog ſvedede i en ſtilleſiddende Tilſtand, ſaa kunde det ikke feile, at Mange af vort Følge, ved ſaa uafladelige og haarde Anſtrængelſer, hvorunder Sveden aldeles gjennemblødte vore Klæder, — maatte blive ſyge. Den Ene efter den Anden kaſtedes paa Sygeleiet, og herved bleve Beſværlighederne og Anſtrængelſerne end mere forøgede for dem, ſom endnu kunde holde ſig paa Fødderne. Denne Skjæbne ramte endog Flere af dem, ſom allerede havde opholdt ſig næſten 3 Aar i Amerika, og forhen udholdt meget haarde Sygdomme der, ſom en Følge af det uvante Clima. Det var naturligt, at Længſelen efter at kunne ſee en Ende paa alle disſe Motſommeligheder tiltog med hver Dag, og denne Længſel blev endelig opfyldt da vi ſlap ud af Ohio- og ind i Miſſiſſippi-Floden.

Forinden jeg gaaer videre i at omtale min Reiſe, vil jeg for de Ukyndigeres Skyld (for hvem jeg egentlig nærmeſt ſkriver disſe Beretninger) kun bemærke, at man fra Baltimore kan paa en Jernbane, der er 250 engelſke Mile lang, komme lige til Pittsburg, og derfra paa Dampſkibe ned ad Ohio-Floden til Portsmouth, hvor jeg ſom formeldt begyndte min Reiſe paa denne Flod. Da flere af de tydſke Oſtſøder, hvoriblandt ogſaa Bremen, drive en ikke ubetydelig Handel paa Baltimore, ſaa pleier denne Vei ofte at benyttes af de fra Tydſkland Indvandrende, ſom ligeledes ville nedſætte ſig i det Indre af Friſtaterne; men den turde maaſkee ogſaa være at anbefale for de Norſke, ſom ſøge derhen, deels fordi den hele Længde fra Baltimore til Portsmouth er over 400 engelſke Mile kortere end Veien

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fra New-York til ſidſtnævnte Sted, deels formedelſt den endnu langt kortere Tid, ſom udfordres til Reiſen, da man ikke behøver mere end 12 a 14 Timer til at paſſere den ovenomtalte Jernbane til Pittsburg.

Da vi ſom ommeldt ſlap ud af Ohio og ind i Miſſiſippi-Floden, fandt vi til vor ſtørſte Forundring, at denne Flods Vandmaſſe var ſtegen til en uſædvanlig Høide, ſaa at den endog —hvilket vi ſiden fik at høre— havde overſvømmet flere ved dens Bredder liggende Byer. Aarſagen hertil, antog man, maatte enten være et Jiebrud eller en ualmindelig ſtærk Regn ved dens Kilder i Canada. Paa denne Flod havde vi nu atter at tilbagelægge en Vei af over 300 engelſke Mile. Underveis maatte vi opholde os et Par Dage i St. Louis, for at vente paa videre Befordring; men dette Ophold gav os imidlertid Leilighed til at faae indkjøbt nogle Sager, ſom vi behøvede til den Huusholdning, vi ſnart ſkulde begynde; thi denne ſtore Handelsſtad var den ſidſte, ſom vi nu havde at paſſere forbi. Her ſkilte vor Ledſager ſig fra os, da han tilligemed en anden Perſon havde begivet ſig udenfor Byen hen til en der boende Normand fra Trondhjem, — fra hvilken Tour han ikke kom tilbage, førend det Dampſkib, hvormed vi toge, allerede var afgaaet. Denne Adſkillelſe forvoldte os dog nu ingen Vanſkelighed, thi et Reiſekart over de nordamerikanſke Friſtater ydede os med Henſyn til Veien den ſamme Tjeneſte. Vi ankom til Hannibal —en lille By i Miſſouri ved Miſſiſſippis Bredder, 132 engl. Mile nordenfor St. Louis— omtrent 1½ Døgn efterat vi havde forladt ſidſtnævnte Sted. Neppe havde vi efter flere Timers Anſtrængelſe midt om Natten faaet vort Tøi iland

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og under Tag, ſamt indrettet vort ſimple Natteleie, ſaa ankom ogſaa de tvende i St. Louis tilbageblevne Perſoner hertil. Herfra havde vi nu 60 engl. Mile landværts at reiſe, førend vi kunde naae det Sted i Miſſouri-Stat, ſom vi havde beſtemt til vor Reiſes Endemaal. Vi leiede til den Ende 2 ſtore Vogne, hver med 2de dobbelte Forſpænd. Denne Befordring var imidlertid meget utilſtrækkelig og foraarſagede os Beſværligheder formedelſt de mange Syge, ſom alle maatte kiøres, uagtet Bagagen optog næſten den hele Plads paa Vognene; og dog var denne Transport den allerbekoſteligſte, ſom vi hidindtil havde havt, da den dagligen koſtede os 8 Pjaſtre. Denne høie Betaling maatte vi ikke alene erlægge for Henreiſen, men ogſaa for de Skydſendes egen Tilbagereiſe, hvilke begge bleve beregnede og betalte efter den Tid, ſom de medtoge paa denne ubanede Vei. Det var en Selvfølge, at alle nogenlunde Friſke maatte gaae tilfods. Endelig ankom vi til de Norſkes Hytter (thi Huſe gives her endnu ikke), ſom laae i en Række efter hinanden ved Udkanten af en liden Skov i en Strækning af 5 engl. Mile. De Syge bleve fordeelte omkring i Hytterne. Men her manglede vi nu Alt, hvad der kunde tjene til nogen Vederqvægelſe baade for os og dem, ja næſten Livets førſte Fornødenheder, naar undtages Maiskorn alene, hvis Meel er til Brød meget tørt og kuns lidet ſammenhængende, omtrent ſom Bygget hos os; thi det lille Forraad af Levnetsmidler, ſom vi bragte med os, var ſnart uddeelt og fortæret. Alle de Norſke vare her i fattige Omſtændigheder, ſaa at vi blot, og det endda kun i Førſtningen, vare iſtand til at erholdt noget Smør og Melk; thi da Vinteren begyndte, var Intet mere at faae

hverken her eller hos de nærmeſt boende Amerikanere. Tvende af de Syge døde efter en kort Tid, og de Øvrige kom ſig kuns meget langſomt.

Paa denne Tid (October Maaned) afholdtes en af Congreſſen berammet Auction over Jorderne heromkring; men Ingen af de Norſke, paa et Par Stykker nær, vare formuende nok til at indfrie endog kun en Part af det Stykke Land, de havde taget i Brug, hvortil Brugerne ſelv have Forkjøbsrettigheden naar de kunne betale Pengene contant. De Fleſte maatte ſaaledes atter drage ud paa øde Mark og begynde forfra igjen uden nogen anden Godtgjørelſe for deres paa Jorden gjorte Forbedringer, end den, Kjøberen godvillig vilde forunde dem. Om de paa denne Maade nogenſinde kunne blive Eiere af et Stykke Land, forudſat endog at de roligen faae beſidde det i de 5 a 6 Aar førend Auction derover ſkal holdes, er neppe troligt, da en Mand vanſkelig er iſtand til der at erhverve Mere end han behøver til ſit og Sines nødtørftige Ophold, og at leie Arbeidere bliver ham altſaa umuligt. Nogle af mine herværende Landsmænd fortalte mig aabenhjertig ſaavel om de Trængſler, de ſelv havde udſtaaet, ſom om de ældre indvandrede Norſkes Skjæbne. Dieſe havde i ſin Tid kjøbt Jord paa Credit omtrent 30 engl. Mile fra Rocheſter ved Bredderne af Ontario Sø. De havde, iſær i Begyndelſen, lidt overordentlig meget af Sygdomme, hvilke ſatte dem betydelig tilbage i deres udvortes Kaar. Vel fik de ikke liden Hjælp af de omkringboende Amerikanere, efterat en Mand havde paataget ſig at ſøge om Underſtøttelſe for dem; men en ſtor Deel af de erholdte Gaver gik desværre op i Luer, da der udbrød Ild i det Huus, hvori de vare

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opbevarede. Den liden Understøttelse, som atter blev ydet dem, var langtfra tilstrækkelig til at afhjælpe den store Nød, og de maatte i lang Tid kjæmpe med trange Kaar, førend deres Forfatning nogenlunde forbedrede sig. I den senere Tid ere Jordeiendommene saavel der, som overalt, hvor Folkemængden tiltager, betydelig stegne i Priis. Flere af disse Norske have saaledes for ikke længe siden solgt deres Eiendomme og faaet 15: til 20dobbelt, imod hvad de selv havde givet, gjort sig gjeldfrie, og derefter begivet sig til Illinois Stat, hvor de atter kjøbte sig større og bedre Jorder til den af Congressen fastsatte Priis, hvorhos de tillige anskaffede sig Kreature. De ere nu i temmelig gode Omstændigheder, hvorimod næsten alle dg i den senere Tid indvandrede Norske maae ernære sig ved tungt Dagarbeide, hvori de sjelden holde det ret længe ud, da de gjerne altid blive syge af det hede Clima, der afpresser dem en overordentlig stærk Sveeduddunstning, hvilken de da paa en Maade tvinges til at erstatte Tabet af, ved en umaadelig Nydelse af koldt Vand. De heraf opstaaende Sygdomme bortrykke i Almindelighed Mange, hvilket især var Tilfældet den Sommer, jeg tilbragte i Amerika: Efter Nogles Sigende skulde alene i Landskabet La Salle være hendøde 40 til 50 af mine Landsmænd, og af den hele Befolkning i bemeldte Landskab ikke mindre end 1400 Mennesker i det korte Tidsrum af 3 Maaneder.

Paa alle de Steder, som jeg tillands gjennemreiste, viste Jordbunden sig mere eller mindre frugtbar. I Mississippi-Dalen var Muldjorden paa sine Steder indtil 3 Alen dyb og meget feed. Da jeg kom ud af denne Dal var den kun fra ½ til 1½ Fod dyb og mindre feed, men

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bærer dog endnu temmelig godt forskjellige Kornsorter i nogle Aar efter hinanden, uden at tiltrænge Gjødning. Dette er ogsaa Tilfældet paa det Sted i Missouri, hvor jeg opholdt mig, som var beliggende 50 engl. Mile i Vest for Palmyra. Her trives Mais og Boghvede udmærket godt, Hvede og Rug middelmaadigt, hvorimod disse 2de sidstnævnte Kornsorter bedre lykkes i de nordligere og østlige Stater, da Sommervarmen der er mere tempereret; Havren er i Almindelighed ringe og bruges kun til Foder; Byggет trives meget sjeldent. Til Fædrift og Svineavl er Landskabet Missouri især bequemt, da Markerne af Naturen ligge beredte dertil, ei alene formedelst det frodige og overalt af sig selv voxende vilde Græs, men ogsaa ved den temmelig store Mængde af Træerne nedfaldende Frugter, som ligge i Skovene.

Skovstrækningerne følge stedse Elvenes og Bækkenes Løb og gjennemkrydse med dem den store Slette, hvoraf Landet bestaaer. Den hyppigste Træsort, som Skovene, saavel i Missouri som i de tilgrændsende Landskaber, indeholde, er Egen, hvoraf man forefinder en halv Snes forskjellige Sorter; dette Træ opnaaer i Almindelighed en god Størrelse, thi Stammens Omfang udgjør ikke sjelden fra 3 til 4 Alen og afgiver til Bygningstømmer det meest skikkede Material. Fremdeles støder man temmelig ofte paa et Træ, kaldet Hickry, hvis Stamme er noget smalere og rankere end Egens, og opnaaer samme Høide som denne. Den bærer en Frugt, der har en paafaldende Lighed med vore Valnødder, idet Kjernen baade har samme Udseende og Smag som disse. Veden af dette Træ bruges fornemmelig til Brændsel, og besidder den fortrinlige Egenskab

fremfor anden Slags Ved, at den brænder ligesaa godt i nyhuggen Tilstand, som naar den har henligget til Tørkning. Videre forefindes — dog i langt ringere Mængde — det saakaldte sorte Valnøddetræ, hvis Ved, formedelst dens store Lighed i Udseende med Mahognyen, fornemmelig bruges af Snedkere til Meubler. Noget hyppigere anträffer man, især i Ohio-Staten, et fjerde Slags Træ ved Navn Secimor, der saavel i Omfang som Høide betydelig overgaaer alle de ovenfor nævnte Arter, da Stammen undertiden opnaaer en Tykkelse af indtil 20 Fod i Gjennemsnit, hvilket altsaa udgjør et Omfang af omtrent 60 Fod. Veden, der er hvid af Coleur, bliver gjerne opskaaren til Bord.

Uagtet de fleste Egne saaledes i større og mindre Grad ere vel forsynede med Bygningsmaterialier, saa skeer det dog imidlertid kun sjelden, at Nogen af de Indvandrende bliver sat istand til at kunne anskaffe sig et ordentligt Vaaningshuus. Hertil maa Aarsagen deels søges i den usædvanlig høie Arbeidsløn, — en Følge af, at der ikke gives mange af de i Bygningsvæsenet kyndige Arbeidere — deels i den Omstændighed, at Priserne paa alt det hertil fornødne Værktøi i det Hele taget ere 3 a 4 Gange saa høie som her i Norge. Reiseomkostningerne, Kjøbet af Jord og de til dens Dyrkning nødvendigste Redskaber, opsluge nemlig i Almindelighed den største Deel af deres fra Europa medbragte Formue, af hvis tilbageværende Deel de ere nødsagede til baade at føde og klæde sig, indtil den opdyrkede Jord kan forskaffe dem det fornødne Ophold. Denne Lykke bliver endda kun et saare lidet Antal af dem til Deel; thi de Allerfleste maae ved Ankomsten til deres Bestem-

melsessted, af Mangel paa Penge, strax søge at forskaffe sig deres Underholdning ved grovt og tungt Arbeide, og om de end herved, paa Grund af den høie Arbeidsløn, kunne fortjene noget Mere end en simpel Arbeidsmand i Europa, saa ere derimod paa den anden Side ogsaa de Nødvendigheds-Artikler, som de af Føde og Klæder behøve, langt kostbarere der paa Stedet end hos os.

Af de i Skovene værende forskjellige Slags Vildt kan især nævnes: Hjorte, der ere noget mindre end hos os, og som kunne antræffes hele Aaret igjennem; Kalkuner og flere Arter Høns, hvilke ligeledes forefindes paa enhver Tid; Gjæs og Svaner m. Fl. derimod kun om Vaaren og Høsten. Af Rovdyr gives der kun et Slags smaae Ulve, omtrent af en Ræv's Størrelse, hvilke, mærkeligt nok, ikke anrette nogen Skade paa Qvæget.

Som en Naturrigdom fortjener det endvidere at bemærkes, at man i hule Træer ikke sjelden forefinder endog betydelige Samlinger af vild Bie-Honning, som i god Smag ikke giver den af tamme Bier Samlede noget efter. Da saa mange Landstrækninger endnu ikke ere beboede og altsaa ligge ganske øde, saa staaer Retten følgelig aaben for Enhver til at bemægtige sig det, som han i saa Henseende kan opdage. Disse Fund have ofte været saa store, at man paa et eneste Sted har kunnet fylde et Kar paa et Ankers Størrelse med Honning. Dette har naturligviis ogsaa givet Anledning for Mange til at lægge sig efter Bieavlen, hvilken i Almindelighed dyrkes med udmærket Held.

Jeg har forhen bemærket, at vi allerede ved Ankomsten til den os af vor Ledsager anviste Plads fik at kæmpe

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med mange Mangler og Savn. Hertil kom, at jeg, som Nyankommen, blev af Ukyndighed forledet til, ved den omtalte Auction, at kjøbe et saadant Stykke Jord, som jeg desværre først bagefter, og altsaa for sildig, kom til Kundskab om var af den Beskaffenhed, at jeg ikke med nogen Tryghed kunde gjøre mig Haab om derpaa at finde mit fremtidige Udkomme. Tiden fra min Ankomst af og indtil Auctionen blev holdt var nemlig saa kort, at jeg formedelst andre Forretninger ikke blev levnet Tid til selv at gjøre mig bekjendt med Eiendommen, som fordetmeste bestod af Skov, af hvilken Aarsag jeg var nødt til at modtage Veiledning og Raad af Andre. Disses Forsikringer gik bestemt ud derpaa, at al den øvrige brugbare Jord, som paa Auctionen vilde blive opraabt, allerede var tagen i Brug af indfødte Amerikanere, som formedelst deres bedre Formues-Omstændigheder nok selv vilde vide at benytte sig af deres Forkjøbsret. Dette Foregivende erfarede jeg bagefter var urigtigt, da det efterat Salget var foregaaet opdagede sig, at der ikke længere end 4 engl. Miles Afstand fra os havde befundet sig en ikke ubetydelig Strækning godt Land saavel med som uden Skov, hvilket endnu ikke var taget i Brug af Nogen. Da jeg efter Auctionsconditionerne allerede strax havde indbetalt Kjøbesummen, for det af mig kjøbte Stykke, til Regjeringen, og jeg paa denne Maade var bleven skilt næsten ved hele min lille contante Formue, saa blev det mig nu umuligt at anskaffe mig et andet og bedre Stykke Land uden i Forveien at have solgt og erholdt Pengene for det allerede Kjøbte. Dette gjorde jeg ogsaa, men maatte finde mig i at give Henstand fra Tid til Tid med Kjøbesummen. I en Forfatning som

den, hvori jeg nu befandt mig, maatte jeg kun alt for snart gjøre den Erfaring, at intet Andet blev mig tilovers, end Valget mellem enten at erhverve mig det daglige Ud-komme ved simpelt Arbeide hos Fremmede, eller ogsaa at benytte de faa Skillinger, jeg endnu havde tilbage, for der-med om muligt at bestride Omkostningerne ved min Tilba-gereise til Europa. Da jeg ikke følede mig stærk nok til under dette uvante Clima at kunne vælge det Første, saa modnedes alt mere og mere den Beslutning hos mig, at vende tilbage til mit Fædreneland, hvortil desuden ogsaa andre Omstændigheder der paa Stedet tilskyndede mig. Disse vare tildeels af den Beskaffenhed, at de ikke for Enhver føles lige trykkende, eller tillægges nogen sær Vig-tighed; men for mig bleve de snart temmelig følelige. Som en Følge af den frie og næsten lovløse Forfatning, hvori alle Beboere af de nordamerikanske Fristater udenfor By-erne leve, gives der ligesaalidt ordentlige Kirker som nogen ansatte Præster, og de enkelte Steder, hvor der maaskee kunde findes Huse til den offentlige Gudstjeneste og af Menighederne selvvalgte Præster, ere kun saare faa og lig-ge meget adspredte.

Efterat have opholdt mig i en Tid af 6 Maaneder i Staten Missouri, tiltraadte jeg i det følgende Aar, 1839, ved Paaske-Tid, min Tilbagereise, og blev ledsaget af mine 2de Brødre indtil Bredderne af Mississippi, hvorfra de igjen vendte tilbage til deres Bopæle. Efter halvandet Dogns Seilads paa et Dampskib nedad Floden, ankom jeg til St. Louis, hvorfra jeg, efter 2de Dages Ophold, med et andet Dampskib vendte et Stykke tilbage indtil Mundin-gen af Illinois Flod og fortsatte derpaa Reisen opad hele

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denne Flod, for at træffe ſammen med en i Illinois boſat Normand, ſom ligeledes agtede ſig tilbage til ſit Fædrene-land, dog kun paa et Beſøg. Den her beſkrevne Omvei var jeg nødt til at gjøre af den Aarſag, at det første Damp-ſkib, hvorpaa jeg indſkibede mig, var beſtemt til St. Louis. Farten opad Illinois-Floden frembød for Øiet en ualmin-delig vild og ſkjøn Udſigt: dens Bredder vare paa begge Sider næſten overalt meget flade, og ſtore uoverſeelige Sletter, der ganſke vare blottede for Skov, grændſede umid-delbart til Floden, hvilken i Regntiden ikke ſjelden over-ſkyller hele Strækninger deraf og gjør disſe paa mange Steder ubeboelige. Da vi endnu kun havde 70 engl. Mi-le tilbage af vor Reiſe paa denne Flod, havde vi det Uheld at Hjulaxelen paa Dampfartøiet pludſelig brækkedes tværs af, ſaa at vi med Nød og Neppe og kuns ved Hjælp af det ene Hjul kunde naae hen til den nærmeſte Bred. Her maatte nu ſaavel jeg ſom de øvrige Paſſagerer oppebie An-komſten af et andet Dampſkib, ſom juſt var ivente, paa hvilket vi alle indſkibede os og ankom efter nogle Timers Forløb til en liden By ved Navn Utica, hvor jeg gik iland. Herfra begav jeg mig tilfods 22 engl. Mile hentil det Sted, hvor min tilkommende Reiſefælle foruden en ſtor Deel andre Norſke boede. Her traf jeg ogſaa endeel af de over Bergen for 2 Aar ſiden udvandrede Normænd, ſom først nedſatte ſig ſydligere i Illinois ved Bæver Crik, men ſom, da Student Rynning og mange Flere døde af det uſunde Climat, flygtede fra deres Huſe og Jordeiendomme, efterat de næſten havde tilſat Alt hvad de eiede. Da jeg havde efterladt mit Tøi i Utica, ſaa vendte jeg den føl-gende Dag med Oxer og Vogn tilbage igjen, for at af-

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hente ſamme. Rygtet om min Ankomſt havde imidlertid udbredt ſig iblandt de ved det offentlige Canal-Arbeide hyrede Normænd. Flere af Diſſe kom løbende til mig paa Veien, deels for at faae høre noget Nyt fra deres Hjemſtavn, deels for at give mig Underretning om deres forſkjellige Kaar og Omſtændigheder; og ikke Faa af dem yttrede Anger over at have forladt deres Fædreneland.

Efter et Ophold af 6 Dage afreiſte jeg i Selſkab med min nye Reiſekamerat fra den nysnævnte lille norſke Colonie, der ligger 12 engl. Mile nordenfor Fox-Flodens Udløb i Illinois-Fl., og fortſatte vor Vei over Land 65 engl. Mile nordefter til Chicago. Paa denne Tour gjennemreiſte vi atter 7 engl. Mile af en Slette, der, ſaa langt Øiet kunde naae, var ſaa flad at den næſten lignede en Indſø. Denne Slette ſkal den ſtørſte Tid af Aaret være bedækket med Vand, men ſom dog ikke er dybere, end at man kan komme frem med Heſte og Vogne. Omtrent paa Midten af Sletten ſtaaer et eenligt Gjeſtgiverſted for at modtage og herbergere Reiſende ſamt viſe diſſe paa ret Vei. Chicago er en ganſke nylig anlagt By, ſom endnu er i ſtærk Opkomſt, formedelſt dens for Handelen gunſtige Beliggenhed ved Soen Michigan, hvilken Omſtændighed med Tiden ſikkerlig vil gjøre den til et Forenings- eller Central-Punkt for den vigtige Handel mellem New-York og New-Orleans, naar nemlig Canalen mellem Illinois Floden og Soen Michigan, der er under Arbeide, kommer i Stand. Da man til denne Canal ikkun har at gjennemſkjære et 110 engl. Mile langt og til Graavning meget bequemt Terrain, ſaa kan det hele Arbeide efter al Rimelighed ventes fuldført om 2 eller idethøieſte 3 Aar, og da vil en Communications-

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Vei aabne ſig, ſom i Længde kommer til at overgaae enhver Anden af dette Slags, ja maaſkee neppe herefter vil finde ſin Lige i hele Nordamerika, idet man fra New-York af uafbrudt kan reiſe tilvands over Hudſons-Floden, Erie Canal, Søerne Erie, Huron og Michigan ſamt Floderne Illinois og Miſſiſſippi lige indtil New-Orleans nær ved den mexicanſke Bugt, hvilken Vei kan anſlaaes til en Længde af omtrent 3100 engl. Mile. Foruden den ovenomtalte Canal arbeides der ogſaa paa Anlæggelſen af en med denne parallel løbende Jernbane, for at befordre Communicationen tillands.

For endnu ikke mere end 5 a 6 Aar ſiden beſtod Chicago kun af nogle faa ſimple tømrede Blokhuſe, nu derimod ſeer man over 400 anſeelige murede Bygninger der, hvilket nokſom vidner om dens hurtige Fremadſkriden. Her oppebiede vi Ankomſten af et Dampſkib fra de østlige Stater, der ſkulde føre os over de tre Søer Michigan, Huron og Erie hen til Staden Buffalo ved Bredderne af ſidſtnævnte Sø. Paa hele denne Deel af Reiſen paſſerede ſaagodtſom intet Mærkeligt, naar undtages, at vi under vor Fart paa Michigan-Søen vare formedelſt en ſtærk Storm nødſagede til en Nat at ſøge Havn, hvor et anſeeligt Forraad af Brænde blev indladet til Maſkinens Drift; ſamt at jeg, ved at paſſere Floden, der forener Huron med Erie Sø, fik Leilighed til at beſee den herved liggende By Detroit, ſom for nærværende Tid endnu er den anſeeligſte af alle de ved disſe Indſøer liggende Handelsſtæder. Efter 10 a 11 Dages Seilads ankom vi lykkelig til Buffalo, hvor vi ſtrax paa en Canalbaad fortſatte Reiſen igjennem Erie Canal til Staden Albany. Jeg fik nu bedre Leilig-

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hed end paa min Hjemreise til nærmere at betragte denne mærkelige Canal, som ikke langt fra Buffalo paa en Strækning af næsten 8 engl. Mile gaaer igjennem en Bjergmasse, hvor man har maattet minere sig frem Skridt for Skridt; ved Enden af denne Bjergmasse, hvor Canalens Løb gaaer nedover en temmelig steil Bakke, har man været nødt til at anlægge 4 Sluseværker med dobbelte Indretninger, saa at den ene Baad kan passere nedad Sluserne medens en Anden gaaer opad samme, uden at de hindre hinanden. Dette Kjæmpearbeide skal efter Sigende have kostet henved 3 Millioner Pjastre. Paa 2de Steder var Canalen endog anlagt over temmelig brede Floder i en Høide fra disses Vandflader af 20 og 30 Alen, og saavel selve Canalen som de uhyre fra Flodernes Bund opførte Piller, hvorpaa den hvilede, vare sammensatte af tilhugne med vandtæt Ciment forbundne Quaderstene; disse Piller gave Canalen i nogen Fjastand Udseende af en Bro. Ikke ret langt fra Albany passerede vi paa et Stykke af omtrent 2 engl. Miles Vei igjennem ikke mindre end 18 Sluser, hvilke saavelsom de Forannævnte alle vare opførte af store retvinklede Quaderstene. Man kan saaledes nok med temmelig Sikkerhed antage, at Anlægget af denne Canal har idetmindste været et af de kostbareste af alle Hidtilværende i Amerika, men ikke desmindre har den dog, i en Tid af mindre end 14 Aar siden dens Fuldførelse, allerede indbragt dens Eiere en saa uhyre Capital, at den overstiger alle havte Omkostninger med 10 Millioner Pjastre. Den paa Canalen stedse tiltagende Fart har derfor bevæget Interessenterne til at lade dens Bredde udvide indtil det Dobbelte, for at gjøre den passabel for Dampskibe, og de have allerede begyndt

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at iværksætte denne Plan, til hvilken Ende flere Tusinde Mand paa forskjellige Steder ere satte i Arbeide fra den ene Ende af Canalen til den anden.

Fra Buffalo til Albany ankom vi efter 7 Dages Forløb og allerede den følgende Dag indskibede vi os paa Dampfartøiet for nedad Hudsonsfloden at seile til New-York. Uden at opholde mig paa dette kostbare Sted længere end høistnødvendig til Indkjøbet af den til vor nu forestaaende lange Søreise fornødne Proviant m. M., begave vi os efterat have hos den norsk-svenske Consul faaet Underretning om at en seilfærdig til Østersøen bestemt svensk Brig laae paa Rheden, ombord paa Denne, indskibede ligeledes vort Tøi og gik efter 2 Dages Forløb, da Vinden blev gunstig, tilsøes. Denne Overreise, paa hvilken vi maatte udholde et Par Storme, gik dog i det Hele taget lykkelig og hurtig for sig, saa at vi allerede efter 5 Ugers Forløb ankom paa Helsingørs Rhed. Her lykkedes det os den paafølgende Morgen iblandt den Mængde for Anker liggende Skibe at faae opspurgt Et, som netop laae seilfærdigt til Bergen. Paa Dette indskibede vi os, og vare efter 8 Dage saa heldige at naae Tananger Havn, hvorfra jeg begav mig til mit Hjemsted Stavanger, glad og takkende Gud, som saa lykkelig og vel havde ført mig frem paa de mange og moisommelige Reiser.

Her har jeg nu fremsat de vigtigste af de Erfaringer, som jeg under mit Ophold i Amerika og paa de dermed forbundne Reiser har gjort. Dersom jeg ved at omtale disse Sidste skulde paa sine Steder have gjort mig Skyld i nogen Vidtløftighed, da maa jeg bede Læseren om godhedes

fuld Overbærelse: jeg kan idetmindste forsikre, at jeg ikke i noget Punkt har veget af fra Sandheden, ligesom jeg fornemmelig har fremstillet det Hele i Sammenhæng, for at oplyse den ukyndigere Deel af mine Landsmænd, som ligeledes maatte ville forsøge deres Lykke i hiin Verdensdeel, om de mange ei alene bekostelige men ogsaa besværlige Reiser, og om muligt overbevise dem om, at de nordamerikanske Stater langtfra tilbyde sine nye Indvandrere alle de Fordele, hvorom saa Mange gjerne ville drømme, efterat de ere førte bag Lyset ved flere opmuntrende og tillokkende, men derhos urigtige Skildringer af de ældre Emigranters Skjæbne og iværende Forfatning. Landet kan vistnok siges at være godt og frugtbart, men ligesom Jorderne nuomstunder kun i de indre Stater, f. Er. i Missouri, ere at erholde for en nogenlunde taalelig Pris, saa hænder det desværre kun meget sjelden, at en Nordboer er saa lykkelig, at han desuagtet kan tilkjæmpe sig nogen Velstand, da det uvante Clima —hvori enhver mindre Formuende maa arbeide— kaster dem Alle uden Undtagelse efter længere eller kortere Tid paa Sygeleiet, som de først efter et halvt, ja undertiden et heelt Aar, ere istand til at forlade. Hvad der især forøger den stadige Sommerhedes ødelæggende Virkning paa Sundheden, er at de varme Dage uafbrudt afløses af kolde fugtige Nætter hele Sommeren igjennem; og alene denne Omstændighed burde gjøre det meget betænkeligt for Enhver, og allerhelst for en Husfader, at reise derhen. Men ialfald bør man betænke den i Sandhed ikke ubetydelige Formue, som udkræves ei alene til Reise-Omkostningernes Bestridelse, men ogsaa til Anskaffelse af Jord, Redskaber, samt Føde og Klæder i den

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temmelig lange Tid, ſom maa hengaae forend Jorden til ſtrækkelig kan belonne ſin Dyrkers Sveed.

Der turde maaſkee findes de, der mene, at jeg, ſom uvant til ſaadanne Anſtrængelſer og Beſværligheder, har ſkildret disſe med altfor ſtærke Farver; men hertil maa jeg deels bemærke, at jeg i en Tid af omtrent 15 Aar har i mit Fædreneland ſtaaet i en Stilling, hvori vedvarende tungt Arbeide udkrævedes; deels er det ikke heller mine egne individuelle Erfaringer alene, ſom jeg i dette Stykke paaberaaber mig, men mangfoldige af mine i Amerika ſig opholdende Landsmænds Vidnesbyrd, hvilke paa noget lidet nær vare ganſke overeensſtemmende med hvad jeg ſelv erfarede. En vis Dr. Gottfried Duden i Tydſkland, ſom har opholdt ſig i en Tid af henved 4 Aar i det Indre af de forenede Stater, gjør i et Skrift, han for ikke længe ſiden har udgivet, den paa anſtillede Jagttagelſer grundede Beregning, at neppe 1 iblandt 8 af de der indvandrede Tydſke ſeer ſine Forhaabninger nogenlunde opfyldte.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

PETER TESTMAN

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE MOST IMPORTANT EXPERIENCES DURING A SOJOURN IN NORTH AMERICA AND ON SEVERAL TRAVELS CONNECTED THEREWITH

A SHORT ACCOUNT

OF THE MOST IMPORTANT

EXPERIENCES

During a Sojourn in North America and on
Several Travels Connected Therewith

By

PETER TESTMAN
Tinner

STAVANGER
PRINTED BY L. C. KIELLAND
1839

THE EMIGRATION from Norway to the United North American Free States began fifteen or sixteen years ago, after that from the southern European countries had already been in progress for a long time. There has been a remarkable increase in the last years, chiefly, perhaps, because of the alluring tales which earlier emigrants, during visits to their native land, have told about the glories of the country in which they now have resided for several years. The reliability of these stories, moreover, was strengthened considerably by the many letters which these visitors usually brought with them from the Norwegians in America to their relatives and friends in Norway, letters which contained, almost without exception, the same praise for that foreign and distant land. All this naturally, in the case of a number of people, wakened the desire to seek their fortune in the much lauded regions where so many of their countrymen — and among them their own kin and friends — found themselves in such happy circumstances. They were strongly encouraged, furthermore, by the visiting emigrants; and from this time emigration began to increase in a marked degree.

A long-nourished desire to view that country and if possible to settle there became a definite determination in my case also, as a result of so many pleasing accounts, for I believed that by means of agriculture and cattle-raising I could find there an independent and pleasant livelihood.

With that purpose in view, early in the spring of 1837 I gave up my business in Stavanger, where I had hitherto resided; but since I was hindered by a number of unforeseen circumstances from availing myself of the opportunity to go on the sailing vessel which departed for New York in the summer of that year, I remained here until the next spring, that of 1838.[5] Together with two of my brothers and three

[5] Two emigrant ships sailed from Norway to New York in 1837, one from Stavanger and the other from Bergen. See Henry J. Cadbury, "Four

other persons I set out from this place early in May and took the route via Bremen, in the expectation of securing readier sailing accommodations across the sea to New York. In this hope we were disappointed, however, as we had to wait there fully three weeks and in the meantime pay high prices for board and lodging. During this sojourn I had an opportunity to observe the German land at Bremerhaven — to which we had come — and along the river Weser as far as Bremen.[6] The region was everywhere well tilled and thickly settled and afforded a pleasing sight to the eyes. Although it was only the beginning of the month of June, the fruitful fields of rye were already headed. I was almost astonished at the size of the cattle which were grazing upon a great, rich plain. According to report, some of them are equal in weight to three good head of cattle of ours, and they give up to twenty quarts of milk at a time.

We finally left Bremerhaven on a new fast-sailing brig of that port, which was loaded exclusively by and with passengers from different parts of Germany. Head winds caused the captain to alter his original course and to steer north of Scotland. We soon had to experience the inconveniences and privations of our situation. Since such a great number of people were packed together in a small room, the air became very foul and unwholesome; and in addition to this the food for which we contracted on board the ship was nearly always so salty that we could eat only a little of it, especially as we were not apportioned as much fresh water as we needed; not to mention many lesser inconveniences.

After about eight weeks' sailing we arrived without mishap at our first destination, New York. We had cruised, with slight exception, against an almost incessant west wind, and we were now glad that we were to be freed, as from a prison.

Immigrant Shiploads of 1836 and 1837," in Norwegian-American Historical Association, *Studies and Records*, 2: 37–52.

[6] Bremerhaven is a seaport town thirty-eight miles north of the city of Bremen.

A large decked boat or barge came to fetch us and it took us first to a large floating wharf equipped with various appliances for the washing of clothes, where all our baggage was inspected. That which was found to be unclean was not permitted to be taken ashore until it was washed. When this had taken place, we were transported by the same boat to one of the wharves on the southern side of the city, where a great crowd of people, who were already assembled, at once swarmed about us seeking to earn something by driving or carrying our things. A large number of innkeepers also crowded in upon us to offer us lodging. The pressure and tumult were so great that we could hardly work our way forward. We were not able to give the necessary attention to our baggage, and we were very fortunate, for, despite this fact, we lost nothing, although the belongings of the different passengers were thrown carelessly into the hold of the boat after the inspection and were now carried in wagons to different parts of the city. We Norwegians put up at a simple inn; nevertheless each person had to pay five-eighths of a piaster* a day for board and lodging.

We stayed in New York five days in order to get our affairs arranged. I did not see anything remarkable as compared with any other large city, but a railroad, which went out from the northern end of the city, with its steam carriages, attracted my attention. This contrivance was the first of its kind that I had seen and I was therefore curious to view somewhat more closely both the carriages and the road. Consequently I decided to take a little trip on it. With several members of my party I therefore entered one of the coaches in the row, and it took us less than half an hour to rush out to the northern corner of the island upon which the city is built, a distance of somewhat more than eight English miles. This road was a double one, so that while the coaches on the

* A piaster or dollar is equal to one hundred cents or, in Norwegian money, one hundred and twelve skillings silver.

one side left the city, those on the other side returned to it. The road was laid out nearly level, all the rough places through which it passed having been cut through. Much labor has been spent especially on a mountain which was bored through to a distance of about three English miles. For a fairly long stretch the mountain stood like an arch over the railroad and formed a so-called tunnel. When we had reached the northern end of the island, where the coaches stopped, we got off and undertook a ramble afoot in order to observe the country roundabout, and we found then that the soil everywhere had to be fertilized and well tilled in order to yield its fruits. We discovered here some ruins of small fortifications from the time the Dutch occupied this region, which doubtless had served as a defense for them against the savage inhabitants of the country.

Our aim was to secure a piece of land from which, through farming and cattle raising, we could earn our living. To attain this end we had to proceed farther into the country. In the vicinity of New York, as a matter of fact, only a little land was available, and that at a price of more than three hundred piasters per acre.* [7] On the day before our departure from New York we met one of our countrymen who was among the first emigrants from the western part of Norway. He was just now on a trip from the western states and was about to return home. He encouraged us to accompany him, and he described the state of Missouri, where he lives, as remarkably beautiful and glorious. We agreed to accompany him to that place — I especially because of securing in him a guide and an interpreter, since he had traveled much in all the northern states and talked English with considerable fluency.[8]

* An acre is about equal to a Norwegian *tønde* of land.

[7] A *tønde land* is a Norwegian measure of land, 56,000 square feet.

[8] The guide was undoubtedly Cleng Peerson. See Theodore C. Blegen, "Cleng Peerson and Norwegian Immigration," in the *Mississippi Valley*

On a big barge with a roof over it, which with five others was tied fast alongside a steamer, we journeyed up the Hudson River to Albany, a distance of a hundred and fifty English miles. From that place, after our baggage had been weighed, we went on board a canal boat to continue the trip through the Erie Canal. The cost for every hundredweight through this canal was ninety-one cents. When this freight charge was paid by the passengers the boat was pulled in upon a huge set of scales which hung deep down in the water. The latter was then let out by means of locks, and the boat, with all its cargo, was weighed in order to estimate the canal tolls which the skipper had to pay. Such a canal boat can carry from one hundred to a hundred and fifty barrels; others, which carry cargoes only and no passengers, can generally hold double that amount.

The boat on which we traveled was drawn night and day by two horses, but we did not go forward very rapidly, as the horses had to advance at a walking pace all the time because of the great cargo. The so-called packetboats, however, which likewise pass through this canal — carrying passengers only — have three horses and go more than twice as fast, but the freight charge on the latter boats amounts to four times that paid on the former. At the many cities through which the canal passes freight was either loaded or unloaded, and this caused some delay in our trip. Provisions at these places were fairly expensive: one pound of butter cost from eighteen to twenty-five cents, one pound of pork twelve to sixteen cents, one pound of meat eight to ten cents, one quart of milk six cents, one loaf of bread — not more than enough to make a meal for one person — six cents, and other things in the same proportion. After six days had passed we reached Rochester,

Historical Review, 7: 321 (March, 1921), and Rasmus B. Anderson, *First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration*, 187 (second edition, Madison, Wisconsin, 1904). Testman's narrative makes it clear that Peerson did not accompany the Testman party from Norway to America, nor did this emigration occur in 1839. On both points the evidence here conflicts with the traditional story.

which is situated 270 English miles from Albany, and we stopped a couple of days with the few of our countrymen who lived there. Our party was increased at this place by several of these Norwegians, so that in all we numbered twenty-two persons. Nearly all those who thus joined us were in poor circumstances and were in part prevailed upon by our guide to accompany us. We arrived next at Buffalo, which is situated ninety-three English miles from Rochester at the eastern end of Lake Erie, where the canal ends. Here we went aboard a large steamboat, which was going all the way to Chicago, in Illinois, a distance of about a thousand miles by sea. Our guide, however, persuaded us not to go there, since our baggage would still have to be carried a hundred miles farther by land, and this transportation would be very costly as no railroad had been built from the latter place. When we arrived at Cleveland, in the state of Ohio, 193 English miles from Buffalo, we again went aboard a canal boat in order to continue on our way through the Ohio Canal and thence, by way of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, to our destination in Missouri. To this change in our traveling plans I was opposed for a long time, because I had learned from printed accounts that nearly all the North American rivers had very low water in the dry season — in which we found ourselves just now, and were therefore difficult to navigate. The outcome showed that this was in truth the case, as I will relate more fully below. The Ohio Canal runs from north to south, for the most part through unsettled, wooded stretches of country, which, however, have already been bought up by rich men for purposes of speculation. This is the reason why the land still lies so uncultivated.

As long as our journey lasted on this canal, which is 306 English miles in length, we did not experience any special difficulties; but when we had reached Portsmouth, where the canal ends, we at once had a very laborious task to perform, combined with considerable outlays of money, in order to convey our baggage to the steamer on the Ohio River, since

the Scioto River, which we had to cross for that purpose, was so low that the canal boat could not navigate it. We all had to begin now to unload from the canal boat the many chests and packages — some of them very heavy — and to load them up again on wagons, on which they were carried to the banks of the Ohio River, where of course we had to repeat the same arduous labor in order to get them over into the steamboat. We now had before us a distance of 619 English miles on this river before we could reach the Mississippi, into which it flows. The Ohio is ordinarily navigable for steamboats from Pittsburgh down its course for a distance of more than 970 English miles to its outlet, but this is not the case in the dry season. This time the river was so very low that we were grounded more than twenty times, and on these occasions we had to unload all our baggage onto barges and thereupon move out to the deeper places in the river, where in turn we reloaded them onto the steamboat as soon as it had worked itself loose, and this it often failed to do until after exertions lasting from twenty-four to thirty hours. At two places, however, it proved absolutely impossible for the boat to cross the shoals, and therefore we were forced to transfer, with all our baggage, to other steamboats which lay below the shoals. As a consequence, the freight charge was double the amount it would otherwise have been for the entire distance from Portsmouth to St. Louis, not to speak of provisions, with which we had to supply ourselves for so long a time, because of the delays of the journey, that the amount was five times greater than planned. Contrary to expectations, provisions became in part even more costly the farther we advanced into the country; thus, for example, the price of milk increased until it was doubled and potatoes cost from three to four piasters per barrel.

As the summer heat during all this part of our trip was so oppressive that we perspired even while sitting still, it was inevitable that many of our company, as a result of such incessant and hard exertions — in which the sweat completely

soaked through our clothes — should be taken sick. One after the other was confined to his bed, and as a result the difficulties and labors of those who could still keep on their feet were yet further increased. This fate overtook even some of those who had already lived in America nearly three years and had earlier survived hard attacks of sickness as a result of the unaccustomed climate. It was natural that the desire to see an end of all these troubles grew with every day, and this longing was finally fulfilled when we left the Ohio and came into the Mississippi River.

Before I go further in this report of my journey, I will merely remark for the benefit of the uninformed (for whose sake especially I am, in fact, writing this account) that one can go from Baltimore all the way to Pittsburgh on a railroad 250 miles long and thence on steamboats down the Ohio River to Portsmouth, where, as I have said above, I began my trip on this river. As several of the German seaports, including also Bremen, carry on a not unimportant trade with Baltimore, this route is often used by the immigrants from Germany, who likewise wish to settle in the interior of the United States; but it may perhaps also be recommended to the Norwegians who seek the same region, partly because the entire distance from Baltimore to Portsmouth is more than four hundred miles shorter than the route from New York to that place, and partly because of the very much shorter time required for the trip, for one does not need more than twelve or fourteen hours to traverse the above-mentioned railroad to Pittsburgh.

When we left the Ohio and came into the Mississippi, as I have mentioned above, we found to our great astonishment that the volume of water in this river had risen to an unusual height, so that, as we were later informed, it had even flooded several cities situated on its banks. The cause of this, it was supposed, must have been either the breaking up of the ice or an unusually heavy rain at its sources in Canada. On this river we now had to put behind us a distance of more than three

hundred English miles. On the way we had to spend a couple of days in St. Louis waiting for further means of conveyance; but this stay gave us, meanwhile, an opportunity to make a few purchases which we needed for the housekeeping we were soon to begin, for this large commercial city was the last which we were to pass by. Here our guide parted from us, since he, together with another person, had gone outside the city to visit a Norseman from Trondhjem living there, and he did not return from this trip before the steamboat which we took had left. This separation caused us no trouble now, however, for a map of the North American Free States rendered us the same service with regard to the route. We reached Hannibal — a little town in Missouri on the banks of the Mississippi, 132 English miles north of St. Louis — about one and one-half days after we had left the latter place. We had scarcely put our goods ashore and under shelter and arranged our simple sleeping quarters — after several hours of work in the middle of the night — when the two persons who had been left behind in St. Louis also arrived. From here we now had sixty miles to travel by land before we could reach the place in the state of Missouri upon which we had decided as the goal of our journey. For this purpose we hired two large wagons, each with two teams. This conveyance was very inadequate, however, and it caused us difficulties on account of the many sick persons, all of whom had to ride on the wagons despite the fact that the baggage took up nearly all the space; and still this means of transportation was the most expensive we had had up to this time, as it cost us eight piasters a day. This high price we were required to pay not only for the trip out but also for the return journey of the drivers themselves, the cost for both trips being computed and paid according to the time which they required on this trackless route. As a natural consequence, all those who were moderately well had to walk. At last we came to the cabins of the Norwegians (for there are as yet no houses), which stood in a row one after another for a stretch of five English miles at the edge of a little

wood.[9] The sick were distributed among the cabins. But we now lacked everything which could serve as nourishment both for us and for them, yes, almost the chief necessities of life, with the sole exception of Indian corn, the meal of which is used for bread which is very dry and not very firm, about like the barley at home; for the little supply of provisions which we brought with us was soon distributed and consumed. All the Norwegians here were in poor circumstances, so that we were barely able to obtain some butter and milk — and even that was possible only at the beginning, for when the winter began there was no more to be had either here or from the Americans who lived nearest to us. Two of the sick died after a short time and the others recovered but slowly.

At this time (the month of October) a public sale fixed by Congress was held of the lands hereabout, but none of the Norwegians, with a couple of exceptions, were wealthy enough to redeem even a part of the piece of land which they had taken

[9] This settlement in Shelby County, in northeastern Missouri, was an offshoot of the Fox River settlement in Illinois. It was founded in the spring of 1837 by a party of twelve or fourteen Norwegians. An immigrant of 1836 who came to the Illinois settlement has left an account of the circumstances which led to the Missouri venture. He and a number of other Norwegians who came to America in 1836 were greatly disappointed with the situation in Illinois. Toward the spring of 1837, he writes, "we hired a man from Stavanger district, one of the first emigrants, Kleng Pedersen Hesthammer, who understood the language and had considerable knowledge about conditions in the country. This man made a journey of investigation for us and reported that he had found land on the west side of the Mississippi River which, in his opinion, was sufficient and good." About the beginning of May, 1837, these settlers moved to the Shelby County settlement. See Sjur Jörgensen Haaeim, *Oplysninger om Forholdene i Nordamerika*, 2 (Christiania, 1842). There has been some difference of opinion concerning the success of the Missouri settlement, but there is no doubt that it was not on the highways of population expansion in the upper Mississippi Valley and that after a few years it began to disintegrate. That Missouri was a slave state did not add to its popularity as a site for a Norwegian settlement. Missouri attracted few Norwegian settlers; many of those who went there soon moved north into Iowa and some returned to Norway. An English translation of Haaeim's *Oplysninger* will be published in volume 3 of the Norwegian-American Historical Association's *Studies and Records*.

into use and to which the users themselves have the right of purchase if they can pay cash money. Most of them, therefore, had to move on again to uncultivated land and begin over again without any compensation for the improvement which they had made on the land save what the buyer would voluntarily grant them. That they can ever in this way become owners of a piece of land, even supposing that they are permitted to occupy it five or six years before the auction of it is held, is hardly believable, for a man finds it difficult to earn more than he needs for the necessary support of himself and his family, and it therefore becomes impossible for him to hire workmen. Some of my countrymen who lived at this place told me frankly both of the trials which they themselves had endured and of the fate of the earlier Norwegian immigrants. The latter had in their time bought land on credit about thirty English miles from Rochester, on the shores of Lake Ontario.[10] They had suffered exceedingly from sickness, especially in the beginning, and this set them back considerably in their external circumstances. It is true that after one man had taken it upon himself to seek aid for them they received not a little help from the Americans residing in the vicinity, but a large portion of their gifts unfortunately went up in flames when a fire broke out in the house in which they were kept. The little aid which was again given them was far from sufficient to relieve the great distress, and they had to contend with straitened circumstances for a long time before their condition was somewhat bettered. In recent times property there, as well as in every place where population increases, has risen considerably in price. As a consequence several of these Norwegians not long ago sold their possessions and received fifteen or twenty times the amount they themselves had paid, discharged their debts, and then went to the state of Illinois, where they bought for themselves more extensive and better lands at the price

[10] This is a reference to the western New York colony that was established by the Norwegian immigrants of 1825.

fixed by Congress and in addition they also procured cattle.[11] They are now in fairly good circumstances, whereas nearly all the later Norwegian immigrants must support themselves by heavy day labor, and this they seldom endure very long as they nearly always become ill as a result of the hot climate, which wrings from them an unusually intense perspiration, the loss of which they must make good, after a fashion, by drinking cold water immoderately. The sicknesses arising from this cause usually carry off many people, and such was especially the case the summer I spent in America. According to some reports, in the short period of three months from forty to fifty of my countrymen in La Salle County alone are said to have died and of the whole population in that county not less than fourteen hundred people.

In all the places through which I traveled by land, the soil appeared to be more or less fertile. In the Mississippi Valley the mould was as deep as six feet at some places and was very rich. When I came outside this valley I found it only from one-half to one and one-half feet deep and less rich; nevertheless it yields different kinds of grain for several years in succession without needing fertilizing. This is the case also at the place in Missouri where I stayed, which was situated fifty English miles west of Palmyra. Here maize and buckwheat thrive remarkably well and wheat and rye indifferently; the

[11] One of the New York settlers, Gjert G. Hovland, in a letter written on April 22, 1835, gives some particulars on this point: "Six families of the Norwegians who had settled in this place sold their farms last summer and moved farther west in the country to a place which is called Ellenaais. . . . I sold my land last summer, in July, 1834, and by the transaction earned in cash the sum of five hundred dollars. I have now decided to buy one hundred and sixty acres, an amount which can be paid for with two hundred dollars. The eight Norwegian families still in this neighborhood desire to sell their land as soon as they can, and to move west." A transcript of this letter, which was written to Torjuls A. Mæland, made from the original in the church archives of Ullensvang, Norway, is in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society. The entire letter is translated into English in the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 2: 68–74 (June, 1922).

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two latter grains succeed better in the more northern and eastern states, however, as the summer heat is more temperate there. The crop of oats is ordinarily small and is used only for fodder; barley very seldom thrives. The state of Missouri is especially suitable for raising cattle and hogs, since the fields are suited by nature for that purpose not only because of the luxuriant wild grass, which grows by itself everywhere, but also because of the fairly large amount of fruits fallen from the trees, which lie in the woods.

The stretches of woods usually follow the courses of the rivers and brooks and traverse, with them, the great plain of which the country is composed. The most common tree which the forests of Missouri as well as those of the bordering states contain is the oak, of which there are a half score of different kinds; this tree ordinarily attains a good size, for the circumference of the trunk not seldom measures from three to four ells and it produces the most suitable material for building. Quite often, furthermore, one comes across a tree called the hickory, the trunk of which is somewhat thinner and straighter than that of the oak, and it attains the same height as the latter. It produces a fruit which has a striking similarity to our walnuts, the kernel having the same appearance and taste as these. The wood of this tree is used chiefly for fuel and possesses the excellent quality, not found in other kinds of wood, of burning just as well in the newly cut state as when it has been dried out. The so-called black walnut tree is also found, though in much smaller quantity, its wood, on account of its great similarity in appearance to the mahogany, being used mainly by carpenters for furniture. Somewhat more frequently, especially in the state of Ohio, one meets with a fourth kind of tree, known as the sycamore, which in circumference as well as in height considerably surpasses all the above-mentioned kinds, as the trunk sometimes attains a diameter which approaches twenty feet, which consequently makes a circumference of about sixty feet. The wood, which is white in color, is usually cut up into boards.

Despite the fact that most regions to a greater or less degree are well supplied with building materials, still it seldom happens that any of the immigrants are able to provide themselves with a respectable dwelling house. The reason for this condition must be sought partly in the unusually high wages — a result of the fact that there are not many workers skilled in the building business — and partly in the circumstances that the prices of all tools required for this work are generally from three to four times as high as they are here in Norway. The expenses of the journey and the cost of the land and of the most necessary implements for its cultivation swallow up ordinarily the largest part of the fortune which they brought with them from Europe, and they have to use the part that remains to supply themselves with food and clothes until the cultivated land can provide them with the necessary subsistence. This good fortune falls to the lot of but a very small number of them, however, for most, upon their arrival at their destination, must at once for lack of money try to provide for their maintenance by coarse and heavy labor. And even if they are able in this way, because of the high wages, to earn a little more than a common laborer in Europe, the necessaries in food and clothing, on the other hand, are much more costly over there than among us.

Of the different kinds of game found in the woods may be mentioned particularly: deer, which are somewhat smaller than ours and can be met with all the year round; turkeys and several kinds of chickens, which likewise are found at all times; geese and swans and the like, which, on the other hand, are found only in the spring and the fall. Of beasts of prey there is only a kind of small wolf about the size of a fox, which, strangely enough, does no damage to the cattle.

It is worth remarking, further, that as natural riches one finds not infrequently very considerable stores of wild honey which is not inferior in good taste to that gathered by tame bees. Since so many tracts of land are not yet settled and therefore lie altogether uncultivated, the right is consequently

open to anyone to take possession of what he can discover in that respect. These finds have often been so great that it has been possible at one place to fill with honey a vessel of the size of an anker. This naturally has caused many to take up bee-keeping, which is generally carried on with very good success.

I have remarked above that as soon as we arrived at the place to which our guide led us we had to struggle with many wants and privations. Thus it came about that I, as a newcomer, through ignorance was beguiled into buying at the above-mentioned auction a piece of land which — as I learned afterward and therefore too late — was of such a nature that I could not, with any security, have the hope of gaining my future livelihood from it. The time from my arrival until the auction was held was in fact so short that, owing to other business, I did not get time personally to examine the property, which consisted for the most part of woods, and for this reason I was forced to accept guidance and advice from others. Their assurances were founded on the belief that all the remaining usable land to be put up at auction had already been taken into use by native Americans who, owing to their better circumstances, would doubtless know enough to avail themselves of their prior right of purchase. This idea, I learned later, was wrong, for after the sale had been held it was discovered that at a distance of not more than four miles from us there was a not inconsiderable stretch of good land, some of it with woods upon it and some without, which had not yet been taken into use by anyone. Since I, according to the conditions of the auction, had immediately paid the government the purchase price for the piece I bought and in this way had been parted from nearly the whole of my little fund of cash, it was now impossible for me to get another and a better piece of land without first having sold and received the money for that which I had already bought. This I did in fact, but I had to agree from time to time to delays in the payments. In a plight such as the one in which I now found myself I had to learn, all too soon, that nothing remained for me but the choice either of

gaining my daily living by ordinary work for strangers or else of using the few skillings that I still had left to defray if possible the expenses of my return journey to Europe. As I did not feel strong enough in this unaccustomed climate to be able to choose the first, the decision ripened more and more within me to return to my native land, and to this resolution other circumstances at that place also prompted me. These were in part of a kind not equally oppressive to everyone, nor are they ascribed any great importance; but in my case they soon were rather specially felt. As a result of the free and almost lawless state in which all the inhabitants of the North American Free States outside the cities live, regular churches and appointed ministers are equally scarce, and the few places where there perchance may be found houses for public worship and ministers chosen by the congregations themselves are extremely few and very far apart.

In the following year, 1839, at Easter time, after having lived in the state of Missouri for a period of six months, I set out upon my return journey and was accompanied by my two brothers as far as the banks of the Mississippi, whence they again returned to their places of residence. After a trip of a day and a half on a steamboat down the river, I reached St. Louis, where after a stay of two days, in order to meet a Norseman who had settled in Illinois and who likewise intended to return to his native country, although only for a visit, I took another boat which went back a short distance to the mouth of the Illinois River and continued the journey up this entire river. I was forced to take the roundabout route which I have described because the first steamboat on which I embarked was bound for St. Louis. The journey up the Illinois River presented to the eye an unusually expansive and beautiful view. Nearly everywhere its banks on both sides were very low and vast boundless plains which were entirely bare of woods bordered directly on the river, which in the rainy season not seldom floods whole stretches of land and makes them in many places

uninhabitable. When we had only seventy English miles left of our trip on this river, we had the misfortune of having the paddleshaft of the steamer suddenly break in two, so that we were barely able — and that only by using the one wheel — to reach the nearest bank. I as well as the other passengers had to wait here for the arrival of another steamboat which was just then expected. We all embarked upon it and in the course of several hours arrived at a little town called Utica, where I went ashore. From here I went on foot a distance of twenty-two English miles to the place where my prospective traveling companion, in addition to a great number of other Norwegians, lived.[12] Here I met also some of the Norwegians who had emigrated by way of Bergen two years before and who first settled farther south in Illinois at Beaver Creek, but who, after student Rynning and many others died as a result of the unhealthful climate, fled from their houses and lands after having lost nearly everything they owned.[13] Since I had left my baggage in Utica, I turned back again the following day with oxen and wagon to fetch it. Meanwhile the news of my arrival had spread among the Norwegians employed in the public canal work. Several of these came running to meet me on the road, partly to hear news from their homes and partly to give me information about their varying conditions and circumstances; and not a few of them expressed regret at having left their native land.

After a stay of six days I departed in company with my new traveling companion from the little Norwegian colony just mentioned, which is situated twelve English miles north of the outlet of the Fox River into the Illinois River, and we continued our journey overland sixty-five English miles northward to Chicago. On this trip we traveled seven English miles

[12] This was the Fox River settlement in La Salle County, Illinois.

[13] For an account of the Beaver Creek settlement see Theodore C. Blegen, *Ole Rynning's True Account of America*, 10 ff. (Norwegian-American Historical Association, Travel and Description Series, volume 1)

across a plain which, as far as the eye could see, was so flat that it almost resembled a lake. It is said that this plain is covered with water the greater part of the year, but it is not so deep but that one can make one's way through it with horses and wagons. About in the center of the plain stands a lonely inn to receive and lodge travelers and to direct them on their way. Chicago is a city founded fairly recently, which is still growing rapidly owing to its favorable commercial location on Lake Michigan, a circumstance which in time will certainly make it a connecting or central point for the important trade between New York and New Orleans when the canal between the Illinois River and Lake Michigan, which is under construction, is completed. Since it is necessary to cut through a terrain of only 110 English miles in length, which is very suitable for digging, the entire project in all probability may be expected to be completed in two or at the most three years, and then a transportation route will be opened which will exceed in length all others of this kind; indeed, perhaps there will never hereafter be another like it in all North America, since, by a continuous water route one can travel from New York by way of the Hudson River, the Erie Canal, Lakes Erie, Huron, and Michigan, and the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers all the way to New Orleans, near the Gulf of Mexico, a route which can be estimated to be a distance of 3,100 English miles. In addition to the above-mentioned canal, the construction of a railroad running parallel to it is also being undertaken, in order to provide a means of communication by land.

Though Chicago not more than five or six years ago consisted of only a few simple log houses, one can now see there more than four hundred respectable buildings on foundations, a fact which sufficiently indicates its rapid progress. Here we awaited the arrival of a steamer from the eastern states which was to transport us across the three lakes, Michigan, Huron, and Erie, to the city of Buffalo on the shores of the last-named lake. During all this portion of the journey practically nothing

worth noting happened, except that during our journey on Lake Michigan we were compelled, because of a hard storm, to put in one night at a harbor, where a considerable supply of firewood was taken on for running the engine; and that I had an opportunity, upon the trip through the river which unites Lake Huron with Erie, to view the nearby city of Detroit, which at the present time is still the most considerable of all the commercial cities situated on these lakes. After a trip of ten or eleven days we arrived safely at Buffalo, where we at once resumed our journey by a canal boat through the Erie Canal to the city of Albany. I now had a better opportunity than upon my first trip to examine closely this remarkable canal, which not far from Buffalo passes through a mountain for a stretch of nearly eight miles, where it has been necessary to dig the channel step by step. At the end of this mountain, where the course of the canal leads down a fairly steep hill, it has been necessary to build four locks with double accommodations, so that one boat can pass down the locks while another goes up, without obstructing each other. This gigantic work is said to have cost about three million piasters. Indeed, at two places the canal was constructed above fairly wide rivers at a height of twenty and thirty ells from their water levels, and the canal itself, as well as the huge pillars — erected from the bottom of the river — upon which it rested, was put together with rough-hewn square stones joined with water-tight cement; from a distance these pillars gave the canal the appearance of a bridge. On a stretch of about two miles in length, not very far from Albany, we passed through not less than eighteen locks which, like those mentioned above, were all constructed of large square stones. One can therefore assume with a fair degree of certainty that the construction of this canal has made it, to say the least, one of the most costly among all those which have been built in America; in a period of less than fourteen years since its completion, however, it has already brought its owners a sum so great that it exceeds by ten million piasters all

the expenses incurred. The steadily increasing traffic on the canal has therefore induced the shareholders to let it be doubled in width in order to make it passable for steamboats, and they have already begun to carry out this plan. For this purpose several thousand men have been put to work at different places from one end of the canal to the other.

We reached Albany from Buffalo after seven days had passed, and on the following day we embarked upon the steamboat to go down the Hudson River to New York. Without remaining in this expensive place longer than was absolutely necessary for the purchase of the provisions and other things required for the long sea voyage ahead of us and after having obtained from the Norwegian-Swedish consul the information that a Swedish brig ready for sea and bound for the Baltic lay at the pier, we went aboard it, shipped our baggage, and two days later, when the wind was favorable, put to sea. This crossing, during which we had to go through a couple of storms, nevertheless was made on the whole successfully and speedily so that at the end of five weeks we reached the Elsinore harbor. We were lucky enough on the following morning to find here by inquiry among the many ships lying at anchor one which was just ready to sail for Bergen. On this one we embarked and were so fortunate as to reach the harbor of Tananger eight days later. From there I went on to my native city, Stavanger, happy and thanking God, who had brought me so safely and well through my many and wearisome travels.

I have now described the most important of the experiences which I have had during my stay in America and on the travels connected therewith. If in telling about the latter I have been guilty of any diffuseness, I must ask the reader's kind forbearance. I can at least assure him that I have in no matter departed from the truth, just as I have in the main presented all in sequence, in order to enlighten the more uninformed of my countrymen who might wish similarly to try their luck in

that part of the world, concerning the much costly as well as laborious travel that is necessary; and if possible to convince them that the North American states are far from offering their new immigrants all the advantages of which so many like to dream after they have been humbugged by several encouraging and alluring, but incorrect, descriptions of the fate and present circumstances of the earlier emigrants. The country can indeed be said to be good and fertile, but while lands are obtainable nowadays only in the interior states, for example in Missouri, for a somewhat reasonable price, unfortunately it very seldom happens that a Norwegian is lucky enough to attain any prosperity; for the unaccustomed climate — in which all the less prosperous must work — puts them all, without exception, on the sickbed after a longer or a shorter time, and they are able to leave it only after a half or sometimes a whole year. What especially increases the destructive effect of the usual summer heat is the fact that the warm days are always followed by cold damp nights throughout the entire summer, and this circumstance alone ought to make it very questionable for anyone — and especially for the head of a family — to go there. At any rate one ought to consider the truly not inconsiderable fortune which is required not merely to meet the expenses of the journey but also to supply land and tools in addition to food and clothing during the fairly long period which must elapse before the ground can adequately repay the sweat of its tiller.

There may perhaps be those who believe that I, as one unaccustomed to such exertion and hardships, have described them in colors altogether too strong, but as to this I must remark on the one hand that for a period of about fifteen years in my native country I occupied a position in which constant heavy labor was required; on the other, that it is not only my own experiences which support me in this matter, but *the testimony of a great many of my countrymen in America,* which, with some few exceptions, was quite in accord with what I

myself experienced. A certain Dr. Gottfried Duden in Germany, who has lived for a period of about four years in the interior of the United States, makes, in a publication which he has not long since issued, the estimate, based upon actual experiences, that barely one out of eight of the German immigrants sees his expectations in some measure fulfilled.[14]

[14] In volumes 12 and 13 of the *Missouri Historical Review,* (October, 1917 — April, 1919), William K. Bek presents an English translation of "Gottfried Duden's 'Report,' 1824–1827."

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